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HOUSE RESOLUTION 26
By Bowers

A RESOLUTION to honor the Bethel A.M.E. Church in Memphis
for 107 years of service to their Lord and
community.

WHEREAS, it is appropriate that the members of this legislative body should recognize those venerable religious institutions and their congregations who, through their unflagging capacity for love, dedication of spirit and faith in God, strive to enrich the lives of the people in their communities; and

WHEREAS, the good people of the Bethel A.M.E. Church in Memphis comprise one such congregation; they are celebrating the Church's 107-year anniversary this year; and

WHEREAS, the congregation was organized in 1894 as the Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church in a section of Memphis known as "China Town," and for forty-seven years, the church was located on Brunswick Street in the area currently known as LeMoyne Gardens; and

WHEREAS, in 1941, under the spiritual guidance of the late Reverend H. R. Reynolds, the congregation moved from "China Town" to 626 Wicks Avenue. A physical plant was later added to the church, along with a kitchen and pastor's study; in addition to the church's spiritual

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growth, many different ministries were added too, including teaching, singing, and evangelical ministries; and

WHEREAS, some of the organizations founded during that time period were the Sunday School, The Gloria Delvin Club, the Usher Board, the White Lily Club, the Senior Missionary Society, and Y.P.D.; and

WHEREAS, ministers who have served astutely at Bethel A.M.E. are the Reverends H. P. Burton (first pastor), H. W. Henning, John Hunter Rogers, I. T. Jefferson, W. E. Pruitt, E. R. Keyes, Louis Williams, R. L. McRae, O. T. Hooks, J. L. Gleese, and M. L. Young; these pastors served unselfishly and untiringly to support the continuation and growth of the church; and

WHEREAS, the Reverend Wortham anticipated the move from Wicks Avenue to Alcy Road; however, he, like Moses, viewed the "Promised Land" but was called home to rest before crossing over. Following the death of the Reverend Wortham, the Reverend R. Neal Vann was appointed interim pastor at Bethel; and

WHEREAS, Bishop H. Thomas Primm, the presiding Bishop of the 13th Episcopal District, appointed the Reverend Charles E. Ware in 1977 as the pastor and shepherd of the great flock; under his leadership, the congregation made its exodus from Wicks Avenue to 2011 Alcy Road and was finally in the church's new home in October of 1977; and

WHEREAS, for 24 years under Pastor Ware's spiritual care and guidance, the Church has continued to grow and prosper, a bus ministry has been added, a Stewardship program has been organized, an evangelical out-reach program has been developed in the community, the sanctuary has been expanded, seven new classrooms have been added and the C. E. Ware Fellowship Hall has been built; and

WHEREAS, the church offers tutoring and counseling services, Boy Scout and Cub Scout activities, and a day care program; and

WHEREAS, Bethel A.M.E. Church was most recently recognized by the Executive Board of the Women's Missionary Society Connectional Meeting for the church's outstanding work in

the community in building the Bethel Day Care Center, Bethel Towers, a Senior Citizens home built with the help of a \$4 million federal grant given by the U.S. Housing Administration; and

WHEREAS, the Bethel A.M.E. Church has significantly contributed to the social, cultural, and economic vitality of Memphis, Shelby County, and the State of Tennessee; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, That we honor the congregation and pastor of the Bethel A.M.E. Church in Memphis for their many years of service to God, their community, and to this state, and extend to them our best wishes as they embark on their 108th year of humble Christian service.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.